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Book Review

Classics in Total Synthesis. By K.C. Nicolaou and E. J. Sorensen. VCH, Basel. 1996. XXXVII + 798pp, DM 78.00. ISBN3-527-29231-4

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This book is essential for any synthetic organic chemist. The authors have carefully selected 36 syntheses of natural products molecules, arranged in a chronological order. The first synthesis starts with the classical synthesis of strychnine by *R. B. Woodward*, ginkgolide B by *E. J. Corey* and concludes with the most recent syntheses of brevetoxin B by *K. C. Nicolaou*. Every chapter begins with an important background of the target molecule, followed by retrosynthetic analysis and strategy, total synthesis and

a conclusion. The book is well illustrated with clear structures, schemes and figures. Some mechanistic details – actually missing in the original papers of the target molecules – are also provided.

This text is highly recommended. It would be extremely useful for any synthetic chemist and make an ideal text book for a natural product chemistry unit or an advanced organic synthesis unit.